

# SEPTIC SYSTEMS

## A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

### WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT MAINTAINING MY SYSTEM?

- Without regular maintenance, a septic system will fail.  
*(It's the homeowners' responsibility to maintain the system!)*
- Save money and protect your investment in your home.  
*(It only costs about \$250 every 3 years to maintain your system, while a new system could cost thousands!)*
- Protect your drinking water and the environment.  
*(A properly working septic will remove pollutants and disease-causing bacteria and viruses (such as E. coli).)*

### HOW CAN I PROPERLY MAINTAIN MY SYSTEM?

- The average septic system should be inspected at least every three years by a professional.
- Limit excessive water usage in your home.
- Protect your home's drinking water for you and your family - NEVER flush hazardous materials into the system!
- Expensive additives are not necessary and they do NOT eliminate the need for pumping!



**When is the last time you had your septic system pumped?**

*Can't recall? Then it's been too long! Call today!*

Maintaining your septic system benefits the entire community by giving everyone access to clean, safe water resources.



For more information on septic systems and how you can help protect the water resources in your area, visit:

[www.swmpc.org/septic.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/septic.asp)

# For Assistance Contact Your Local Health Department

Get your septic system and water quality questions answered by the:

## Berrien County Health Department

(269) 926-7121

## Cass County Health Department

(269) 445-5280

## Van Buren Health Department

(269) 621-3143

### Can I spot potential problems in my septic system?

**Yes!** If you see...

1. Plumbing backups
2. Sluggish Drainage
3. Mushy ground or ponding water around the drainfield

**Call a licensed septic tank company IMMEDIATELY! (see list)**

### SEPTIC COMPANIES\*

Industrial Sanitation SVC - Benton Harbor, MI (269) 926-6360

Modsanco, Inc. - Benton Harbor, MI (269)944-5021

White's Septic - New Buffalo, MI (269) 756-7443

Hunt's Septic Tank Service - Niles, MI (269) 683-4757

Krueger's Septic SVC - Niles, MI (269) 684-2580

\*Additional Companies in your area can be located in the local yellow pages or on-line at

[http://www.deq.state.mi.us/shr/hauler\\_directory.aspx](http://www.deq.state.mi.us/shr/hauler_directory.aspx)

## DO

- Learn the location of your septic tank and drainfield from your septic company
- Have your septic system inspected every three years
- Call a professional whenever you experience problems
- Keep a detailed record of repairs
- Conserve water to avoid overloading the system
- Divert sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the septic system



## DON'T

- **EVER** go down into a septic tank - toxic gases in the tank can kill in minutes
- Allow anyone to park or drive over the system
- Plant anything besides grass over or near the drainfield
- Dig in your drainfield or build anything over it
- Make or allow repairs without obtaining the required health department permit
- Allow backwash from home water softeners to enter the septic system

For more information on septic systems and ways you can improve water quality visit [www.swmpc.org/septic.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/septic.asp)

